

With all the work and hardship, the pioneers took time out for a little recreation in the form of dancing and programs. The following is a sample of an Old Folks' party the first to be held on April 21, 1899:

The old folks of Midway held a reunion at the Social Hall on Friday, April 21, 1899. Owing to the demise of our esteemed townsman, Elder Elijah Alder, a large portion of the ward was not represented at the reunion; however, as it were, about 90 people participated in the enjoyment. An interesting program had been prepared by the committee of arrangements.

At noon the aged folks who had been brought together by comfortable conveyances, were all seated and the proceedings commenced by the congregation singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet, and etc." Bishop John Watkins presiding at the organ. Prayer was offered by Counselor A. J. Alexander. Bishop Watkins made a short speech of "Welcome," followed by Counselor Conrad Abegglen in bidding all a hearty welcome in the German tongue. Now everybody was



One of the first Sunday School kindergarten classes held in Midway in 1903. Pictured in front of the John A. Fortie home, are, first row, left to right, Cuba Van Wagoner, Thelma Van Wagoner, Alice Probst, unknown, Walter Buehler, Stella Culmer, Grace Reese, Fawn Bronson, Lora Bronson, Stella Probst, unknown, unknown. Second row, unknown, unknown, Rosetta Boss, unknown, Earl Provost, Homer Sulser, Lamont Epperson, Francis Probst, unknown, unknown, Jessie Smith. Third row, Lila Baum, unknown, Noah Besendorfer, Wallburga Besendorfer, Owen Burgener, Nate Coleman, unknown, Lowell Kohler, Reed Abplanalp, Edith Wilson, Erwan Murdock, Retha Murdock. Back row, Trella Provost, Ida Huber, Cora Street, Blanche Huffaker, Carson Smith, Arnold Burgener and Birdie Huffaker. The babes in arms are twins, Dean and Deon, of John A. and Emma Jeffs Fortie.



An older class of the Midway First Ward Sunday School in 1905. First row, left to right, Eliza Bronson, Nancy Van Wagoner, Ann Bronson, Maggie Willett Wilson, teacher, John Van Wagoner Jr., teacher; Luella Van Wagoner, Blanche Greenwell. Second row, Rolland Wootton, Alvah Ross, Henry S. Coleman, Guy E. Coleman, Everett Nelson, Charles Wilson, Charles Buehler.

ready for dinner, and it was announced by Elder Jacob Probst that dinner was also ready. Brother Jeremiah Robey asked the blessing.

Looking over the tables it would have been impossible to accuse anyone of neglect of duty related to gastronomical matters. The tables were loaded with the best in the market, well prepared, and relished in good style. A fine spirit seemed to brood over everybody; the salt and pepper of an occasional pun or part of some ancient story were not wanting, especially those relating to pioneer life. After dinner a recess of half an hour "was ordered" by the master of ceremonies, Jacob Probst, for a social chat: "And there was chat."

Elder Jeremiah Robey followed with a short speech saying, "I was born on the 14th day of April in 1809 in Harrison County, West Virginia. Heard the gospel and went to Nauvoo in (part torn from minutes), was baptized by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the river, first for myself and afterwards for my father. Brother Joseph then put his arm around me saying: "Now your father is happy!" I worked on the temple doing all the turning that was done there and I hung the last door that swung in the temple. As far as any pay for work is concerned, as men understand it, I did not get any, but I received my endowments there, and that paid me very well for all I did or can do. The saints were poor and molested by the mobs. I finally went to Pisgah and there found my wife busy in killing rattlesnakes. I was at Nauvoo when the Prophet was

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Seek Ye First...

Religion was the mainstay in the lives of the early settlers along Provo Valley's Snake Creek. Nearly all of them left the security of homes and opportunities in the East and in foreign lands to cast their lots with the growing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Through persecution and bitterness they had suffered in Missouri and Illinois, and now they were giving their lives to establish cities where they and their families could enjoy religious freedom.

Life was hard along Snake Creek, but never hard enough that the work couldn't be accomplished in six days of work a week. The Sabbath Day was reserved for worshipping, studying the Gospel and resting for the rigors of another week. Even before the first meeting house was built in the upper settlement in 1862 the people were meeting in each others' homes for worship services.

Just before the first meeting house was completed in July, 1862, Church authorities in the valley called Sidney H. Epperson to serve as Snake Creek's first presiding elder. He and his counselors, John Fausett and Samuel Thompson were sustained on June 26, 1862. These brethren also presided over the lower settlement until 1864 when David Van Wagonen was called as presiding elder there. His counselors were Andrew Hamilton and David Wood.

In 1866 because of Indian trouble the Saints of both settlements were advised to join ranks as one settlement in order to have the necessary strength for protection. A compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements and the settlers, forted in, called the site Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was the survey of the townsite. Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carried the tape, Mark Smith and Attewell Wootton, Sr., the pegs, and within a few days Midway was laid out in ample blocks with the public square in the center.

Around the central square seventy-five primitive dirt-roofed log cabins sprang into existence, some abutting against each other while in some instances strong panels of upright posts made palisades between cabins built slightly apart, the whole forming an impregnable wall around the square. Small rear windows were to serve as portholes in case of attack. The fort was conducted under military law, having officers and picket patrols, arising and doing certain work at the call of the bugler, John Watkins.

546

These noble and Godfearing people now sensed the happiness of well provided security and felt they would be able to repel any attack of the Redman. Fortunately, the fort was never attacked; and when it was time to disband after a treaty had been made with the Indians and they had gone to live on reservations, most of the people decided to remain here. The upper and lower settlements were never rebuilt. The old fort was reserved by the town as a public square where meeting houses, schools, and stores were built.

Today a beautiful monument and marker erected by the Daughters of the Pioneers marks the scene and describes in a meager way the pioneering of this beautiful valley.

Under date of February 4, 1867, David F. Van Wagonen wrote from Midway that the winter had been comparatively mild with only 20 inches of snow and the thermometer only 4 degrees below zero at sunrise January 1, 1867. The health of the people was good and the past winter had not witnessed a single drunken person, nor heard of any riotous conduct in the whole valley, mainly because there were no distilleries or liquor shops.

The first grasshoppers were seen at Midway July 27, 1867.

December 29, 1867 Joseph S. Murdock was released as Presiding Bishop of Provo Valley and Abram Hatch was sustained in his place.

May 26, 1868 the first missionary from Midway, James Wooley Fisher, was set apart for a mission to Great Britain. He returned in 1869.

March 11, 1868 Sidney H. Epperson was reappointed by Bishop Abram Hatch as Presiding Elder of Midway with David F. Van Wagoner and Ira Norton Jacob as his counselors. The former counselors John Faucett and Samuel Thompson were released.

In 1868-69 a substantial rock building was erected at Midway on the southeast corner of the public square in which a good school was soon commenced. The house was built by taxation and was used for religious and other meeting purposes until 1874.

April 10, 1870 Sidney H. Epperson and counselors were released, and Henry Samuel Alexander was appointed Presiding Elder over the Midway Branch with David F. Van Wagoner and John Huber counselors.

In 1871 John Huber, the second missionary to be called from Midway, was called to the Swiss and German Mission, and Ira N. Jacob succeeded John Huber as second counselor to Henry S. Alexander. There were no further changes in the presiding officers until the organization of a ward in 1877.

In 1872 Elder George C. Lambert visited Midway, and he wrote the following interesting item which appeared in the Deseret News September 25, 1872:

"I arrived at this interesting little town last evening and contrary

killed; had my hand on his horse when he left for Carthage, and Brother Joseph said; "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter." Brother Graham stood by, asking some counsel from Joseph, to which the Prophet replied: "I cannot give you counsel now; I am going to Heaven before I come back again." If we had been in possession of our guns, we might have offered some protection. Brother Robey spoke in an easy and audible manner, his remarks making quite an impression.

Four of the YMMIA glee club rendered an original selection, "Ho, the Herd Bells are Ringing, & etc." Followed by a violin solo by Miss Sylvia Kennah which was exceedingly well executed. Father Conrad Gertsch favored us with a German song in his own alpine style, entitled "The Chamois Hunter." Brother B. M. Smith and Moroni Blood played a violin duet in the good old style of 40 years ago, which made some of the aged dancers twitch their toes in their shoes. Now as to step dancing, Brother A. J. Alexander can do it to anyone's satisfaction, giving an exhibition of his agility and time on the day and date aforesaid. A selection "Do None Remember Me," was sung by Bishop J. Watkins, Mrs. Watkins, and their daughter Polly, followed by a recitation by Miss Polly, entitled "The Old Man in the Palace Car." The members of the glee club gave one of their best, the "Schwitzers Heimweh" in German. In his interesting speech Brother B. M. Smith said he helped to plow the first furroughs on this side of the river in 1895. Brother E. A. Probst and Sister Maggie Watkins sang "Margherite," their voices blending remarkably well. The aforesigned judgment has since been proven to be entirely proper. Misses Ada Mohlman and Eliza E. Huber sang an original piece, "When the May Breeze Whisper," in which they were accompanied from the guitar by Brother John Huber. After singing the doxology and benediction by Bishop John Watkins, everybody appeared well, satisfied and happy, wishing themselves and all mankind much good. And thus closed the old folks party, at Midway, Utah, on Friday afternoon, April 21st, 1899.

By Request of Committee
Very Respectfully,
(s) John Huber

On January 1, 1899 James T. Wilson was appointed recorder of speeches at sacrament meeting and Christian Schoney, janitor, at \$50 per year.

Th June 30, 1901 at a ward conference, Conrad Abbeglen, 2nd Counselor, to Bishop John Watkins, was released because of poor health and John Ulrich Buhler was sustained in his place.

Re December 23, 1902 Bishop John Watkins died and Alvah J. Alexander carried on in his place until a reorganization was effected February 8, 1903.

Ca At a stake quarterly conference held at Heber City February 8, 1903, presided over by Apostle Mathias F. Cowley and the Stake Presidency, the Midway Ward was divided into two wards.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Seek Ye First...

Religion was the mainstay in the lives of the early settlers along Provo Valley's Snake Creek. Nearly all of them left the security of homes and opportunities in the East and in foreign lands to cast their lots with the growing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Through persecution and bitterness they had suffered in Missouri and Illinois, and now they were giving their lives to establish cities where they and their families could enjoy religious freedom.

Life was hard along Snake Creek, but never hard enough that the work couldn't be accomplished in six days of work a week. The Sabbath Day was reserved for worshipping, studying the Gospel and resting for the rigors of another week. Even before the first meeting house was built in the upper settlement in 1862 the people were meeting in each others' homes for worship services.

Just before the first meeting house was completed in July, 1862, Church authorities in the valley called Sidney H. Epperson to serve as Snake Creek's first presiding elder. He and his counselors, John Fausett and Samuel Thompson were sustained on June 26, 1862. These brethren also presided over the lower settlement until 1864 when David Van Wagonen was called as presiding elder there. His counselors were Andrew Hamilton and David Wood.

In 1866 because of Indian trouble the Saints of both settlements were advised to join ranks as one settlement in order to have the necessary strength for protection. A compromise location was chosen half way between the two settlements and the settlers, forted in, called the site Midway.

The first step in laying out the new settlement was the survey of the townsite. Sidney H. Epperson and John Huber carried the tape, Mark Smith and Attewell Wootton, Sr., the pegs, and within a few days Midway was laid out in ample blocks with the public square in the center.

Around the central square seventy-five primitive dirt-roofed log cabins sprang into existence, some abutting against each other while in some instances strong panels of upright posts made palisades between cabins built slightly apart, the whole forming an impregnable wall around the square. Small rear windows were to serve as portholes in case of attack. The fort was conducted under military law, having officers and picket patrols, arising and doing certain work at the call of the bugler, John Watkins.

546

These noble and Godfearing people now sensed the happiness of well provided security and felt they would be able to repel any attack of the Redman. Fortunately, the fort was never attacked; and when it was time to disband after a treaty had been made with the Indians and they had gone to live on reservations, most of the people decided to remain here. The upper and lower settlements were never rebuilt. The old fort was reserved by the town as a public square where meeting houses, schools, and stores were built.

Today a beautiful monument and marker erected by the Daughters of the Pioneers marks the scene and describes in a meager way the pioneering of this beautiful valley.

Under date of February 4, 1867, David F. Van Wagonen wrote from Midway that the winter had been comparatively mild with only 20 inches of snow and the thermometer only 4 degrees below zero at sunrise January 1, 1867. The health of the people was good and the past winter had not witnessed a single drunken person, nor heard of any riotous conduct in the whole valley, mainly because there were no distilleries or liquor shops.

The first grasshoppers were seen at Midway July 27, 1867.

December 29, 1867 Joseph S. Murdock was released as Presiding Bishop of Provo Valley and Abram Hatch was sustained in his place.

May 26, 1868 the first missionary from Midway, James Wooley Fisher, was set apart for a mission to Great Britain. He returned in 1869.

March 11, 1868 Sidney H. Epperson was reappointed by Bishop Abram Hatch as Presiding Elder of Midway with David F. Van Wagonen and Ira Norton Jacob as his counselors. The former counselors John Faucett and Samuel Thompson were released.

In 1868-69 a substantial rock building was erected at Midway on the southeast corner of the public square in which a good school was soon commenced. The house was built by taxation and was used for religious and other meeting purposes until 1874.

April 10, 1870 Sidney H. Epperson and counselors were released, and Henry Samuel Alexander was appointed Presiding Elder over the Midway Branch with David F. Van Wagonen and John Huber counselors.

In 1871 John Huber, the second missionary to be called from Midway, was called to the Swiss and German Mission, and Ira N. Jacob succeeded John Huber as second counselor to Henry S. Alexander. There were no further changes in the presiding officers until the organization of a ward in 1877.

In 1872 Elder George C. Lambert visited Midway, and he wrote the following interesting item which appeared in the Deseret News September 25, 1872:

"I arrived at this interesting little town last evening and contrary